

Cultural Mapping of Dorms

Juan Pablo Herrera-Urizar & Josh Myers

EVOKE

About the Ethnographer

My name is Juan Pablo Herrera-Urizar. I am from Bolingbrook, Illinois a suburb of Chicago. I live in FAR Oglesby Hall. I was interested in this project because I grew up in real diverse schools so i was used to the different types of people, but then hearing about this project gave me a chance to see if there were people who never grew up in a culturally diverse community and see how they felt about issues such as these.

I am Josh Myers, an undergraduate freshman and a white male living in PAR. I was interested in this project because I saw glaring disparities between the whiteness off the Six Pack and the rest of the campus dorms, especially in FAR/PAR.

EXPLORE

Question

What questions is your inquiry contingent upon?

Social and cultural mapping of the dormitories, on and off campus accommodations.

The project will discuss current and past trends of the distribution of students based on race, sex, socio-economic status, etc. within the dorms and what impact these trends have on accommodations within the dorms and in the greater university area.

Plan

How will you go about answering your inquiry?

I also set up an interview with a Resident Advisory of FAR which is right across the street from PAR. Josh and I will plan to discuss with the RD issues concerning the population of minorities and international students in FAR compared to those in the "Six Pack". We will see if the RD will be able to provide us with a good amount of information and opinion in order to further our progress in our research.

JPHU

I just set up an interview with an RD of PAR and plan to discuss diversity and accomodations for minoirities and foreign students. PAR is where the international student communities exist. I know the RD personally and she is very nice and will probably be very willing to help and provide us with a better understanding of diversity from a managerial point of view.

JM

Throughout this week we plan to interview a certain amount of students from each hall, each from a certain race, and we will find out their input of the subject of the segregation between the dormitories. We will keep the number of students we interview from each hall equal so none of the information we get leans to one side or the other.

Since the archives have no information about cultural/social divisions of the dormitories, we will go to the Housing and Admissions offices to find official information and statistics about housing division.

We will observe each of the Resident halls personally, and record what types of advertisements they have, whether they are focused mainly on one group of people, or everyone as a whole.

As a group we will go to the University archives and research how this dorm situation was like in the past years here at U of I

Part of the plan is to find statistics of race, gender, socio-economic status, etc. in school databases or archives

The plan is to interview various students of various backgrounds from the dorms, both public and private, to determine the student perspective on cultural and social mapping. Also I plan to interview multi-cultural advisors and school officials to see how and why the dorms are divided as they are.

OBSERVE

What observations, or findings are you encountering in your research?

Throughout my experiences walking in and observing PAR/FAR and the Six Pack, I have taken special notice of the frequency of foreign languages spoken. PAR/FAR, being the location of the international crossroads and global community, has a much higher frequency of foreign languages spoken: some examples being Spanish, Korean, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Japanese, several Indian languages, and several others.

JM

It seems that students that do not select a roommate are placed "randomly" by the university to room with students of similar backgrounds, and this extends to ethnicity and race. I have seen this personally: there are four black students in my hall who were placed "randomly", and they were paired together. The percentage of minority students on campus that have no roommate preference and the percentage of minority students "randomly" placed with other minority students should be investigated to see if such occurrences are a coincidence.

JM

Josh and I went to the Undergraduate Library Archives to research and investigate our topic. The archivist who works there gave us great help. There was no information specifically on our subject, but there was information that could help us investigate our topic more thoroughly. He showed us past overall distribution of students by race and ethnicity here at the University. There were files dating back to the late 1800s up to 1992. Since the written files only went up to 1992 this really did not help us very much. Then he showed us a website link that had the information we needed. It had the overall

distribution of students by race and ethnicity dating up to recent times. Using this resource we will be able to explore and research statistics about race, gender and other percentages of students here at the University.

JPHU

Allen Hall- Pablo and I went to Allen hall after the archives and found that the bulletin boards largely promoted social events and music events (Shakespeare theatre, Indian dance club, Battle of the bands, Benefit concerts, social issues theatre, etc.).

JM

The menus seem to change from dorm to dorm during "Late Night", and special ethnic or cultural cuisines take place at different dorms during different days of the week. 'Soul food' is served, in addition to rap and R&B music being played, every Thursday at FAR during 'Soul Ingredient'. Soul food is known as a largely southern and African American cuisine, and the vast majority of diners during soul food night are black. ISR has 'Cocina Mexicana' (latino cuisine) on Fridays, Peabody has 'Fat Don's' (barbeque/grill) on Wednesdays, LAR has 'Field of Greens' (vegetarian) Monday-Friday, Busey-Evans has 'Oodles of Noodles'(noodles) on Fridays, and Gregory hall has 'Cracked Egg Cafe' (breakfast for dinner) on Tuesdays. The locations of these specialty meals will be compared to cultural-mapping statistics to determine if they are accommodations or coincidences.

With a seemingly higher percentage of minority and international students, PAR and FAR have more advertisements for multi-cultural activities than I have seen when observing other dorms and their lounges. Also, there are posters and bulletin boards solely dedicated to issues of race and diversity: there was a "hate wall" that had under slips of paper hateful racist slurs to discourage their use, and it was recently replaced with a wall that is titled "in search of race". We'll continue to investigate different accommodations in different dorm halls. F.M.

DISCUSS

Discuss your inquiry, taking care to separate speculation from fact or data

As I mentioned in the observations, there is a high frequency of non-English languages spoken in FAR/PAR, and few in the Six Pack. More interestingly is the size of the conversations: it is not uncommon to see groups upwards of 15 all speaking languages other than English in FAR/PAR. Non-English conversations in the Six Pack that I have witnessed have never exceeded 4 or 5 speakers, and they are generally in Spanish. The frequency and size of non-English linguistic marketplace in FAR/PAR seems to serve as a useful transitional tool for international students. When writing the paper I will be sure to include extensive information about the special housing communities offered in PAR/FAR for international student communities.

The concept of self-segregation is implemented within the dorms. On Thursday I went to Soul Ingredient in FAR for dinner, which serves soul food. In the main dining section there were 150-200 students dining, and only 10 or so were not black. In the separate

smaller dining section there were 30-40 diners, and there were only about 5 black students present. This microcosm of de facto self-segregation in the dorms provides a great insight to how and why students may choose to live in areas with a high concentration of ethnically similar students.

JM

After watching the video "Legally integrated, Socially Segregated" there were many things that opened my eyes and also played an enormous role in the progression of our research project. One of the main things that I realized is the knowledge that students have on the segregated dormitories and even the university as a whole. Many of the students in the video acknowledge the fact that the Six Pack is primarily made up of white students and that PAR/FAR is primarily made up of minority students. If we are not able to find hard statistics, we can use the students, that we interview, observations and experiences. We will include questions that will need answers based on their perceptions.

JPHU

Several people from the video address self-segregation: people tend to stick with their own kind in regards of ethnicity, class, and other things that may set people apart in order to feel comfortable or at home. This seems to be extended in housing and what incoming freshman are told about housing: the Six Pack is largely white and FAR/PAR house the largest percentage of minorities. Incoming students may take this into consideration when deciding where they want to live. If we cannot find statistics we will include questions in our interviews about self-segregation, housing choices and opinions over social segregation and its existence within housing.

JM

From the video, we discovered that Financial Aid award is determined late in comparison to average application submission, and therefore will affect where students are placed. Late applicants are often not given their first choice when it comes to dorms (I experienced this personally), and a large percentage of minority students are awarded Financial Aid. The Six Pack seems to be the dormitory in which most want to live, but since several minority students are admitted late, they are forced to live in less desired dorms (namely FAR/PAR).

JM

REFLECT

Link

Connect with other resources and materials.

<https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/hschein/www/readings/diversity/ethnic-housing.html>

this article describes the benefits for minority students to live in ethnic housing

http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/Academics/Diversity/pre_collegiate/rules.cfm

this link provides us with information about diversity-promoting programs and accommodations made for students

Here is the website that the archivist provided us with

<http://www.dmi.uiuc.edu/stuent/>

JPHU

Implications

Could your findings have broader implications beyond this inquiry?

The unwillingness of the University to provide us with information about social mapping of the dorms and the evidence we've found has opened my eyes to the existence of high amount of self-segregation and the moderate amount of institutionalized segregation that exists within the school. As a microcosm of housing practices in suburbs however, the University is significantly more sensitive to diversity and integration, and much of the segregation is by the choice of the students.

OTHER

A space for other notes, findings, comments, etc.

Final

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[Final.zip](#) (Wed 12/13/2006 21:28)